

Adjectives

An adjective is a word that describes a noun — "smart," "pretty," "good," etc. Remember that اسم الفاعل (the active participle) acts as an adjective.

الفيلم ده ممِل (il-film da mumill)

This movie is boring.

كتاب كويس (kitaab kwayyis)

a good book

هو نايم (howwa naayim)

He is sleeping.

الست اللي واقفة هناك (is-sitt illi wa'fa hnaak)

the woman who is standing there

Inflections for gender and number

As with nouns, to make adjectives feminine or plural, usually you add a suffix: ة (-a) for the feminine form, ين (-iin) for the regular plural form.

But again, many adjectives do not have regular plural forms, so for those you have to memorize the broken plurals. The first half of the list above is made up of adjectives with broken plurals. Also see the following examples:

	Singular masculine	Singular feminine	Plural
big	كبير (kibiir)	كبيرة (kibiira)	كبار (kobaar)
poor	فقير (fa'iir)	فقيرة (fa'iira)	فقرء (fu'ra)

Here's a regular adjective:

	Singular masculine	Singular feminine	Plural
good	كويس (kwayyis)	كويسة (kwayyesa)	كويسين (kwayyisiin)

Note: Say an adjective ends in **-ي** (-i) and is not of the form **فاعل** (faa3il). When you're adding on your **ة** and **ين** suffixes to make it feminine/plural, you need to insert a "yy" between the adjective and the suffix (in terms of your pronunciation).

	Singular masculine	Singular feminine	Plural
stupid	غبى (gabi)	غبية (gabeyya)	أغبياء (ağbiya)
smart	ذكى (zaki)	ذكية (zakeyya)	أذكىاء (azkiya)
Egyptian*	مصري (maSri)	مصرية (maSreyya)	مصريين (maSriyyiin)

* See below for more on this type of adjective.

If, however, an adjective ending in **ي** is of the form **فاعل**, you don't insert a "yy" between it and the suffix when you're making it feminine/plural. And while the masculine form of this adjective has a long "aa," the feminine and plural forms have a short "a."

	Singular masculine	Singular feminine	Plural
expensive	غالي (gaali)	غالية (galya)	غاليين (galyiin)
quiet, calm	هادي (haadi)	هادية (hadya)	هاديين (hadyiin)

Adjectives: agreement

In English, adjectives come right before the noun they describe, but in Arabic, adjectives always directly follow the noun they modify. Also, adjectives and nouns must always agree in definiteness (they must be both definite or both indefinite).

Adjectives for singular nouns

A singular noun is modified by a singular adjective of the same gender.

المدرس الجديد (il-mudarris il-geidiid)
the new teacher – lit. "the-teacher the-new"

بنت هادية (bint hadya)
a quiet girl – lit. "girl quiet"

Adjectives for dual nouns

Any dual noun must be modified by a plural adjective.

ولدين مصريين (waladein maSriyyiin) two Egyptian boys	كتابين غاليين (kitaabein galyiin) two expensive books
بنتين سوريين (binteiin suriyyiin) two Syrian girls	عربييتين جدد (ʕarabiyyatein gudaad) two new cars

Adjectives for human plural nouns

Human plural nouns, masculine or feminine, are usually modified by masculine plural adjectives.

أولاد كبار (awlaad kobaar)
big boys

بنات صغار (banaat Sogaar)
small girls

Adjectives for non-human plural nouns

Non-human plural nouns are modified by feminine singular adjectives. This is confusing at first, but you get used to it fast!

دول متقدمة (dowal mit'addima)
advanced countries

3(عربيات قديمة arabiyyaat 'adiima)
old cars

أفلام جديدة (aflaam gediida)
new movies

Note: A lot of beginning students get confused about adjectival phrases and whether or not they

can be complete sentences. Look at these examples for some clarification:

الـتلميـذ الشاطر (it-tilmiiz šaaTir)

A complete simple sentence: "The student is smart." (Lit. "The-student smart.")

الـتلميـذ الشاطر (it-tilmiiz iš-šaaTir)

A phrase/sentence fragment: "The smart student." (Lit. "the-student the-smart.")

تلميـذ شاطر (tilmiiz šaaTir)

A phrase/sentence fragment: "A smart student." (Lit. "student smart.")

Nisba adjectives (النسبة)

Nisba adjectives are those that indicate a relationship, often a nationality. Nouns are transformed into these adjectives in this manner:

1) Drop any definite article at the beginning of the noun, and any taa marbuuTa (ة) or alif (ل) at the

end of it.

2) Add the suffixes **ي (-ii)** for the masculine adjective, **ية (-eyya)** for the feminine adjective, and **يين (-iiyyiin)** for the plural adjective.

Here are some examples of nouns and their correponding nisba adjectives:

	Noun	Adjective	Masculine singular	Feminine singular	Plural
Egypt	مصر (maSr)	Egyptian	مصري (maSri)	مصرية (maSreyya)	مصريين (maSriyyiin)
Lebanon	لبنان (libnaan)	Lebanese	لبناني (libnaani)	لبنانية (libnaneyya)	لبنانيين (libnaniyyiin)
the United States	أمريكا (amriika)	American	أمريكي (amriiki)	أمريكية (amrikeyya)	أمريكيين (amrikiyyiin)
Palestine	فلسطين (filisTiin)	Palestinian	فلسطيني (filisTiini)	فلسطينية (filisTiineyya)	فلسطينيين (filisTiiniyyiin)
Syria	سوريا (surya)	Syrian	سوري (suuri)	سورية (sureyya)	سوريين (suriyyiin)
Sudan	السودان (is-suudaan)	Sudanese	سوداني (sudaani)	سودانية (sudaneyya)	سودانيين (sudaniyyiin)
school	مدرسة (madrasa)	scholastic	مدرسي (madrasi)	مدرسية (madraseyya)	مدرسين (madrasiyyiin)

Note: For some nouns that end in -a, you don't follow that formula but use the suffixes **وي (-awi)**, **وية (-aweyya)**, and **ويين (-awiyyiin)**.

	Noun	Adjective	Masculine singular	Feminine singular	Plural
France	فرنسا (faransa)	French	فرنسوي (faransawi)	فرنسوية (faransaweyya)	فرنسويين (faransawiiyiin)
Asia	آسيا (asya)	Asian	أسوي (asawi)	أسوية (asaweyya)	أسويين (asawiiyiin)
year	سنة (sana)	yearly/annual	سنوي (sanawi)	سنوية (sanaweyya)	سنويين (sanawiiyiin)
prophet	نبي (nabi)	prophetic	نبوي (nabawi)	نبوية (nabaweyya)	نبويين (nabawiiyiin)

Some plural nisba adjectives are irregular:

	Masculine singular	Feminine singular	Plural
Arab	عربي (ʔarabi)	عربية (ʔarabeyya)	عرب (ʔarab)
Turkish	تركي (turki)	تركية (turkeyya)	أتراك (atraak)
Kurdish	كردي (kurdi)	كردية (kurdeyya)	أكراد (akraad)
Moroccan	مغربي (maġribi)	مغربية (maġribeyya)	مغاربة (maġarba)
British	انجليزي (ingiliizi)	انجليزية (ingliizeyya)	انجليز (ingiliiz)